CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Currently Amended) A magnetic actuator comprising:

a first yoke including an assembly of laminated metal sheets;

a second yoke affixed to the first yoke;

a permanent magnet;

an armature located inside the first yoke and movable in reciprocating motion over a stroke between a first position and a second position, along a first direction; and

at least one coil~~; and an actuating mechanism causing the armature to move along the first direction~~, wherein

a flux generated by the at least one coil passes through a first magnetic circuit ~~of a flux generated by the coil includes~~ including the armature and the first yoke ~~and moves~~ to move the armature toward one of the first and second positions ~~when the coil is excited~~, and

~~a second magnetic circuit of~~ a flux generated by the permanent magnet ~~includes~~ passes through a second magnetic circuit including the permanent magnet, the first yoke, the second yoke, and the armature~~, and~~ to hold the armature ~~is held~~ at one of the first and second positions ~~by the flux generated by the permanent magnet~~.

Claim 2 (Cancelled).

3. (Previously Presented) The magnetic actuator according to claim 1, wherein the permanent magnet is located between the first yoke and the second yoke, at an end surface of the second yoke facing the armature.

4. (Previously Presented) The magnetic actuator according to claim 1, including

a second magnetic air gap between the second position and an end surface of the armature facing the second position when the armature is held at the first position, and

a first magnetic air gap , differing from the second magnetic air gap , between the first position and an end surface of the armature facing the first position when the armature is held at the second position.

5. (Previously Presented) The magnetic actuator according to claim 1, wherein the second yoke is oriented along the first direction.

6. (Previously Presented) The magnetic actuator according to claim 1, wherein

the second yoke is oriented along a second direction which is perpendicular to the first direction.

7. (Previously Presented) The magnetic actuator according to claim 1, wherein the second yoke includes an assembly of laminated metal sheets.

8. (Currently Amended) The magnetic actuator according to claim 1, wherein a ~~lower~~ first yoke section of the first yoke at the second position of the armature has a smaller cross-sectional area than ~~an upper~~ a second yoke section of the first yoke at the first position of the armature.

9. (Previously Presented) The magnetic actuator according to claim 1, wherein the first yoke has stepped surfaces creating a partial air gap between the first yoke and the armature when the armature is held at either of the first and second positions.

10. (Previously Presented) The magnetic actuator according to claim 1 further comprising a jack bolt fitted to the second yoke, wherein the permanent magnet is affixed to the second yoke and an air gap between the armature and the permanent magnet can be varied by operating the jack bolt, so a metal sheet can be inserted between the second yoke and the first yoke.

11. (Currently Amended) The magnetic actuator according to claim ~~2~~ 19, wherein a magnetomotive force produced by the first coil differs from a magnetomotive force produced by the second coil.

12. (Previously Presented) The magnetic actuator according to claim 1, wherein the at least one coil includes multiple coils.

13. (Previously Presented) The magnetic actuator according to claim 1, wherein an end portion of the armature through which the fluxes pass, facing the first yoke, has a smaller cross-sectional area than other portions of the armature through which the fluxes pass.

14. (Previously Presented) The magnetic actuator according to claim 1, wherein the armature includes an assembly of laminated metal sheets.

15. (Previously Presented) The magnetic actuator according to claim 14, wherein the laminated metal sheets are bound together with solid end plates at both ends of the assembly of the laminated metal sheets.

16. (Previously Presented) The magnetic actuator according to claim 15, wherein peripheral surfaces of each of the end plates are positioned inside of end surfaces of the assembly of laminated metal sheets.

17. (Currently Amended) The magnetic actuator according to claim 1, wherein the permanent magnet is located ~~between~~ within the first yoke and the second yoke, and between elements of the second yoke.

18. (New) The magnetic actuator according to claim 1, further comprising an actuating mechanism moving the armature along the first direction.

19. (New) The magnetic actuator according to claim 1, including a first coil and a second coil fitted to the first yoke.